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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUCPDOC/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUEWMFD/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE  
RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC

UNCLAS ADDIS ABABA 002743

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EEB/IFD/OMA - JWINKLER AND EEB/CBA -  
DWINSTEAD  
USAID FOR AFR/EA HELLYER AND DALTON  
DEPT PASS TO USTR FOR PATRICK COLEMAN, CECILIA KLEIN, AND  
BARBARA  
GRYNIEWWICZ  
DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC FOR ITA MARIA RIVERO  
DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC FOR REBECCA KLEIN

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [EAIR](#) [ETRD](#) [ECON](#) [ET](#)  
SUBJECT: ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES CEO KEEPS SUPPORTING BOEING  
DESPITE AIRBUS DEAL

REF: ADDIS ABABA 1278

**¶1.** (SBU) In a shift from his privately-made disparaging remarks about the lobbying efforts of Airbus in June (reftel), Ethiopian Airlines (EAL) CEO Girma Wake told CDA on November 2 that Ethiopian Airlines needs a "mix of planes given the size of the airline." (Note: Wake subsequently confirmed the purchase of 12 long-range Airbus A350 aircraft to be delivered in 2017. Press reports valued the deal at USD 2.8 billion. Airbus is holding a press conference in Addis Ababa on November 20 to discuss its "Global Market Outlook for the airline industry in East Africa." End Note.) Wake nevertheless expressed commitment to Boeing for mid-sized aircraft and said he would not cancel EAL's order of Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft. (Note: State Minister for Transport and Communications Getachew Mengistie told Econoff EAL has 35 aircraft on order: 15 Boeing (10 787s and 5 777s), 12 Airbus, and 8 Canadair. EAL will have 112 aircraft total upon delivery of these orders. End Note.) Wake actually asked to push delivery of the 787s a bit further from late 2010 to July 2011 so EAL can fine tune the details of its 787 aircraft layout and evaluate whether to stay with its current order mix of 787-8s and 787-9s or shift some or all to 787-9s. These 787s will replace EAL's older Boeing 767 aircraft. Wake went on to say he believes EAL will eventually order more Boeing 787s and was trying to convince Kenyan Airways to not cancel its 787 aircraft order. CDA Meece told Wake he appreciated EAL's support of Boeing and mentioned the potential high-level visit by Boeing officials in December (led by Scott Carson, Executive Vice President). Wake acknowledged the planned visit and said he was trying to firm up dates whereby Boeing officials could meet both the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister.

**¶2.** (SBU) In regards to U.S. airline codeshare negotiations, Wake stated EAL needs to restart discussions with United Airlines. He said United has told EAL it was forced to put these talks on hold while finalizing agreements with Continental Airlines. Now that those discussions are complete, EAL looks to restart negotiations with either United or Continental to finalize a codeshare agreement. He

indicated that if EAL is unable to complete an agreement with United, pursuing Continental would be easier due to what he perceives as United's more complex bureaucratic structure.

¶3. (SBU) Wake also said airline competition across Africa needs to be maintained. He said this competition is crucial to improving each airline and offers regional training opportunities for all. Wake mentioned EAL's involvement in a new regional airline in Togo and referred to various problems EAL has had in securing a West African technical stop for EAL flights to the United States. EAL investigated options in Senegal, Ghana, and Nigeria, but now is evaluating The Gambia's potential, especially given the amount of African-American tourists who visit sites near Banjul.

MEECE